Because they were going so fast, it was difficult to talk. In fact, they drove in silence until half-way there they stopped at a posting inn. The Duke had his own horses waiting for him. They were another well-matched team, but this time jet black, with the exception of a white star on their noses. They were fresh, frisky and moved even more swiftly, Luella thought, than the chestnuts.

When she remembered how long it had taken her when driving to the Castle with Mr Drago, she could hardly believe it when they reached the outskirts of London.

As they moved into the traffic which slowed their pace, she said in a hesitating voice: "I . . I do not . . like to . . bother Your Grace . . but where will . . Enrico and I . . stay the night?"

"You are going to stay at my house in Park Lane," the Duke replied, "and so that my Aunt will not be shocked, you will be provided with a chaperon." Luella waited and he went on: "I sent a message to my London secretary to find one, and I expect it will be his wife, who is a very charming woman."

Luella could only give a sigh of relief. Now she need not humiliate herself by having to ask him for some money. Instead she said in a low voice: "Thank you . . thank you very . . much! I am so . . sorry to be such a . . nuisance."

"You are nothing of the sort!" the Duke replied. "You have promised to help me, and it is absolutely essential that you personally tell the Italian Ambassador exactly what you told me. Then we can leave him to find a solution."

Luella thought she should be very grateful to the Marchioness for having suggested the Ambassador. At the same time, she was worried about Enrico. She could not help thinking about the sordid street from which Signor Vecchio had collected him. Yet he looked in no way neglected. The clothes he wore were expensive and in good condition.

She wanted to ask the Duke what he thought had happened to the boy before his mother died. It seemed unlikely that he would have lived in one of Signor Vecchio's houses. Perhaps Tia had had a flat of her own. But she knew she would not talk to the Duke about Tia without feeling embarrassed. She just had to wonder to herself, and find no answer to the questions that were in her mind.

As they drew up outside the Duke's large house in Park Lane, he said: "I am certain I have broken the record! It has taken me only three-and-a-half hours to get here. I have never done it as quickly as that before."

"That be true, Y'Grace," the groom agreed, who had got down from his seat at the back of the travelling carriage.

"Then I am very pleased with myself!" the Duke said. "Now, see that the horses are given a good feed, because they deserve it."

The groom grinned. "Oi'll do that, Y'Grace." He touched his hat respectfully as the Duke and Luella walked into the house.

There was another butler, white-haired and not unlike Bates. There were also six footmen in attendance. "What we want is champagne, Hewitt," the Duke said. "I have broken the record coming here,